

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 00398 141039Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----015390 141044Z /14

O R 140952Z JAN 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4648
INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T AMMAN 0398

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PGOV, MASS, JO, LY, SA, TU, XF
SUBJECT: HUSSEIN TO VISIT LIBYA?

REF: AMMAN 0227 (NOTAL)

1. HUSSEIN TOLD ME EVENING OF JANUARY 12 THAT HE IS SERIOUSLY THINKING OF ACCEPTING QADDHAFI'S INVITATION TO VISIT LIBYA. WHEN I TOLD HIM POLITELY THAT I WONDERED WHETHER IT WAS REALLY WISE TO BUILD SOME KIND OF DEPENDENCE ON LIBYA AND ASKED WHAT FOR, HE SAID THAT HE WAS NOT SURE, THAT HE COULD WELL "NOT COME BACK", BUT HIS FRUSTRATION WITH THE SAUDIS AND THE EMIRATES WAS DRIVING HIM TO TRY TO DO SOMETHING.

2. THEN IT ALL ROLLED OUT. THE SAUDIS HAD STILL NOT RESPONDED ON THE VISIT, AWAITED SINCE JANUARY 1, OF HIS PRIME MINISTER. THE SAUDI AMBASSADOR HAD
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BEEN CALLED IN AND TOLD IF THE SAUDIS COULD NOT RECEIVE THE PRIME MINISTER (AS AGREED SOME WEEKS AGO) IN THE NEXT FIVE DAYS THEN THE PM WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO GO. THE UAE HAD PROVIDED ONLY DOLS 15 MILLION FOR THE CENTURION TANK REFIT DEAL WHICH THE UK GOVERNMENT SAID WOULD COST 86 MILLION STERLING. THE UAE HAD COMMITTED ITSELF ON THIS OVER TWO YEARS AGO, ACCORDING

TO HUSSEIN, AND THEY HAD NOW BEEN TOLD IN EFFECT BY JORDANIANS, TO KEEP THEIR MONEY. FAHD'S INTERVIEW (AMMAN 0236, NOTAL) WAS STILL IRRITATING HUSSEIN AND HE BUILT FOR ME FURTHER GLOOM INTO HIS ANALYSIS THAN HE HAD REVEALED TO THE ZABLOCKI DELEGATION TO WHOM HE HAD JUST FINISHED TALKING (SEPTEL). APPARENTLY THE FAHD STATEMENT THAT IS IRRITATING HUSSEIN IS NOT BARBARA WALTERS INTERVIEW JAN 3, BUT PLO ANNIVERSARY STATEMENT JANUARY 8, TEXT OF WHICH NOT AVAILABLE HERE.

3. AT THIS POINT HE DID TELL ME THAT THE SHAH WAS GOING TO REBUILD HIS PATTON (M-48A1) TANKS AND WAS CLEARLY PLEASED THAT THE PROJECT WAS GOING AHEAD.

4. ON LIBYA, HE DID NOTE THAT BOUMEDIENE WHO WAS HERE THIS WEEK CAUTIONED HIM THAT QADDHAFI WAS STILL A LITTLE "YOUNG AND UNPREDICTABLE." NEVERTHELESS, HE TOLD ME HE WAS FEELING DESPERATE ENOUGH TO MAKE THE JOURNEY WHATEVER THE PHYSICAL DANGERS; HE NEEDED HELP TO DEFEND HIS COUNTRY. HE WOULD BE CAREFUL, BUT IF LIBYA WOULD GIVE HIM HELP WHEN OTHERS WOULD NOT, THEN HE WOULD GO TO LIBYA. I POINTED OUT THE ABSURDITY OF JORDAN HAVING TO DEPEND ON LIBYA TO HELP DEFEND ITSELF AGAINST DANGERS FROM IRAQ OR SYRIA. HE REPEATED HE HAD TO GET HELP WHERE HE COULD FIND IT. HE ADDED THAT QADDHAFI HAD A MILITARY
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GROUP IN JORDAN NOW AND THEY ONLY WANTED SIX OFFICERS FOR THEIR MILITARY ACADEMY. THE URGENCY HAD GONE OUT OF THEIR REQUEST AND HE PRESUMED THAT THE EGYPTIAN BORDER WAS NOW MORE STABLE. I REPEATED FOR HIM OUR CONCERN ABOUT ANY HELP TO LIBYA AND THE POSSIBILITY OF IT BACKFIRING IN THE CONGRESS. HE SAID WITH ONLY SIX MEN IN THE MILITARY ACADEMY HE DID NOT SEE HOW IT COULD CAUSE ANY HARM AND HE THOUGHT THERE SHOULD BE SOME ALTERNATIVES FOR THE LIBYANS TO THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS.

5. COMMENT: AS IN THE PERIOD OF HIS FRUSTRATION OVER THE HAWK DEAL, THE KING SEEMS TO BE TURNING TO THE OUTRAGEOUS SOLUTION TO SHAKE UP THE SAUDIS AND THE EMIRATES. HIS OWN PERSONAL GLOOM OVER THE PEACE PROCESS, THE BEGIN INITIATIVES, AND OUR FAILURE TO "PRODUCE" MUCH FROM THE ISRAELIS LIES BEHIND ALL OF THIS. IT TAKES THE OBVIOUS FORM OF HIS MILITARY CONCERN OVER THE POSSIBILITY OF THE FORMATION OF A "SYRIAN-IRAQI RED CRESCENT" TO FORCE HIM WITH THE CHOICE OF BECOMING A REJECTIONIST OR HAVING TO FIGHT TO CONTINUE MODERATE. WHILE LIBYA LOOKS LIKE A TERRIBLE ALTERNATIVE OPTION

FOR HIM TO SELECT, AND HE SEEMS TO RECOGNIZE THE
POSSIBLE CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES, SO WAS THE
SOVIET UNION TWO YEARS AGO WHEN HE WAS DUELING WITH
THE SAUDIS OVER THE HAWK DEAL. THE SOVIETS WORKED
THEN, AND LIBYA JUST MIGHT WELL WORK NOW. CERTAINLY
THE TRIP TO MOSCOW, HOWEVER PAINFUL IT WAS FOR ALL
THE PARTICIPANTS AND ONLOOKERS, CATALYZED THE FINAL
ARRANGEMENT. UNFORTUNATELY TOO, AS THE PRESSURE
INCREASES IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD, HUSSEIN BEGINS
TO LOOK TO HIS DEFENSE PROBLEMS AND THE END RESULT
IS ALWAYS A DEMAND FOR MORE HELP, GIVEN THE BALANCE
OF FORCES IN THE AREA AS HE (AND WE) SEE IT. WE
DO NOT DETECT ANY PRESSURE OF GREAT PROPORTIONS
FROM WITHIN HIS MILITARY FOR MORE MODERNIZATION,
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BUT WE CANNOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT
HE HAS PROMISED THEM SPECIFICALLY SOMETHING MORE
AND NOW FEELS COMPELLED TO MAKE DELIVERY EVEN IF
IT MEANS A PILGRIMAGE TO TRIPOLI* END COMMENT.

6. AT END OF OUR TALK KING ALSO REMARKED THAT HE
WAS THINKING OF REOPENING DIALOGUE WITH THE PLO
WHICH STARTED LAST YEAR AND ENDED WITH HIS CAIRO
CONVERSATION WITH ARAFAT. HE MADE IT CLEAR THAT HE
THOUGHT THE ROAD AHEAD WAS GOING TO BE ROUGH AND
THAT IT WAS BETTER TO BE IN TOUCH WITH ALL PARTIES IN
SUCH A CASE THAN TO HAVE NO COMMUNICATION.
PICKERING

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